

REMARKS

In response to the Official Action mailed February 24, 2003, Applicant amends his application and requests reconsideration. No claims are added or cancelled so that claims 1-6 remain pending.

HANDLING ERRORS

This patent application has been subjected to a number of handling errors. Those errors not previously resolved need to be corrected now. Initially, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office lost the specification of the patent application and refused to accord a filing date to the patent application. Upon petition, the correct filing date was granted.

There is some indication that not only the specification was lost but also the Preliminary Amendment filed simultaneously with the patent application may have been lost. On the other hand, there is evidence that the Preliminary Amendment was received but entered only for certain purposes. The patent application as submitted included a multiply dependent claim. In the Preliminary Amendment, the multiple dependency was removed and claims 5 and 6 were added to replace the multiple dependencies. However, the Examiner indicated that only four claims were examined, claims 1-4. The Official Filing Receipt indicates the presence of six claims and the demand to file a missing Declaration did not include any fee for the filing of multiply dependent claims. Therefore, there is some indication that the Preliminary Amendment was entered. An additional copy of the Preliminary Amendment is attached along with a copy of the stamped postcard proving the filing of the Preliminary Amendment. If the Preliminary Amendment has not been entered, it should be entered now. The claims as amended here are the claims submitted in the Preliminary Amendment.

Two Information Disclosure Statements were filed in this patent application. The Examiner acknowledged one of those Information Disclosure Statements but not the Information Disclosure Statement filed July 10, 2002. There is no indication in the PAIR system that this Information Disclosure Statement was entered in the file of this patent application. For the Examiner's convenience, an additional copy of the Information Disclosure Statement with the references and proof of the filing of the Information Disclosure Statement are attached. An indication of consideration of the four references submitted in the Information Disclosure Statement, which is based upon the European Search Report for a corresponding patent application, in the next communication is respectfully requested.

OFFICIAL ACTION

In the Official Action, claims 1-4 were rejected as indefinite based upon language appearing in claim 1. The language cited does not appear in the claim 1 that was presented by way of preliminary amendment. No terms in the claim 1 that appeared in the Preliminary Amendment lacked antecedent basis and no claim presented here lacks antecedent basis. The rejection is moot.

In this Amendment claims 4 and 6 are amended solely to correct a typographical error that appeared in the Preliminary Amendment. Claim 1 is amended to make clear what is claimed. The principal parts of that amendment simply explain the relationship of the internally threaded portion of the pipe fitting to the extension collar, both of which are at an open end of the pipe fitting. The claim explains more clearly that the wall thickness of the extension collar is substantially equal to the wall thickness of the internally threaded portion of the pipe fitting. This description is not only consistent with what is shown in the figures of the patent application but is clearly described at page 4, lines 4-8 of the patent application.

Claims 1, 2, and 4 were rejected as anticipated by Wadsworth (U.S. Patent 2,053,087). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant agrees that Wadsworth describes a pipe coupling with an extension collar having larger outside and inside diameters than the outside and inside diameters of the internally threaded portion of the pipe coupling. However, an inspection of each of the pertinent figures of Wadsworth, namely Figures 1, 2, and 4, clearly shows that the sidewall of the extension collar is substantially thinner than the sidewall of the internally threaded portion. Thus, Wadsworth cannot anticipate any claim now pending.

Claims 1 and 4 were rejected as anticipated by Clemens (U.S. Patent 437,019). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant agrees that Clemens describes a pipe joint, particularly an elbow fitting having an extension at the end of the fitting, beyond the internally threaded portion, for receiving a sealing material. It is apparent that the thickness of the sidewall of the elbow fitting is substantially uniform except at the collar portion. The collar portion, has the same outside diameter as the rest of the pipe fitting, including the internally threaded portion. Thus, the sidewall thickness must be smaller at the collar than at the internally threaded portion. Accordingly, Clemens cannot meet the terms of claim 1 and therefore cannot anticipate any claim now pending.

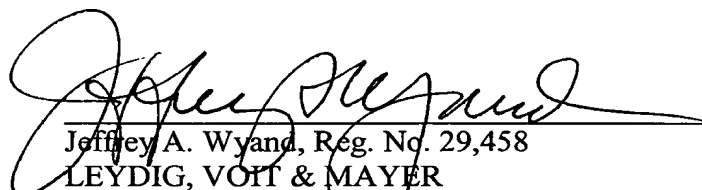
Claim 3, a dependent claim, was rejected as unpatentable over Reich (U.S. Patent 616,011) in view of Pelletier (U.S. Patent 4,730,855). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Pelletier was cited only with regard to materials of construction of a pipe fitting, namely galvanized iron. It is apparent by inspecting the figures of Pelletier, that it could not meet any other part of claim 3, a claim that incorporates the elements of claim 1. Thus, for the rejection to be proper, Reich must meet all of the limitations of claim 1, i.e., anticipate claim 1, a rejection that was not made.

Reich does not anticipate claim 1 so that the rejection of claim 3 cannot be properly maintained. It is apparent by inspecting Figure 2 of Reich, the only pertinent figure, and by considering the description of that figure beginning at page 2, line 31 of the patent, that the pipe joint described does not meet the limitations of claim 1. Namely, the sidewall thickness of the elbow fitting *f* is substantially larger than the sidewall thickness of the internally threaded portion of the pipe joint. Reich is principally concerned with avoiding the effects of differential thermal expansion resulting from the flow of very cold fluids through the pipe joint. Reich provides no suggestion or explanation as to why the thickness of the elbow joint *f* should have any particular dimension, much less be equal to the thickness of the internally threaded portion of the pipe joint. Thus, Reich does not meet the terms of claim 1 and cannot, even when modified by Pelletier, suggest claim 3, which incorporates the limitations of claim 1.

Since all of the claims now pending have been demonstrated to be patentable over the prior art cited and applied, reconsideration and allowance of all of claims 1-6 are appropriate and earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,


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